

## **THE END OF THE WAR.**

In 1917, the USA entered the war on the Allied side. Americans had been angered by the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915 and furious when the Germans announced early in 1917 that their U-boats would attack any ship trading with Britain. This was the main reason they decided to declare war on Germany. The old links between the United States and Britain and a shared belief in democracy also played a part. President Woodrow Wilson said that he wanted to make 'a world safe for democracy'.

That America had entered the war was good news for the Allies, even though it would take time for the American soldiers to arrive. It came just as Russia seemed to be dropping out of the war. The Russian Revolution and the delay before the Americans arrived gave Germany one last chance. General Ludendorff pulled together all his forces, including many which he could withdraw from the Eastern Front. All through the summer of 1918, German forces attacked the Allied trenches. They broke through in many places, seeing open country in front of them for the first time for four years. However, the Allies retreated, regrouped and stopped the German advances.

British and French food supplies were good, unlike those of the Germans. The first American troops began to arrive, and the Allies appointed one supreme commander, [Marshall] Foch, to unite their efforts. Having blocked the German attack, the Allies counter-attacked. Tanks were used in large numbers. The French had more than three hundred and the British more than five hundred. The Germans were pushed back all along the Western Front. The German commanders asked for an armistice before the fighting reached Germany itself. At the same time, there were riots and revolution among the starving German people. With chaos at home in Germany, fighting stopped on 11 November 1918.

### **Why did Germany lose the war?**

The main reasons why Germany lost the war are: The effects that the long war had on the German economy. Once the Schlieffen Plan had failed, Germany had to fight on two fronts at once. It was unlikely ever to win a long drawn-out war on two fronts.

The arrival of the Americans. This tipped the scales of economic and industrial strength decisively against Germany.

The naval blockade. The shortages of raw materials weakened German industry, and lack of food broke the morale of the German people.

On the battlefield, the development of the tank made trench warfare out-of-date. The Germans were not successful in developing a tank of their own. Allied tanks were very important indeed in 1918.